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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

FOOT-BALL: SPORT AND TRAINING.

A YOUNG student who has left home and a parent's watchful care, especially if the home be at some distance from a large city, arrives under the shades of the college he has chosen in a peculiar state of mind. In most cases a healthy, vigorous youth, he is full of life and spirits, and rather over-filled with his own new importance and freedom. He comes among three or four hundred like himself, young bucks who do not wish it to appear that they have come into any different atmosphere from that of the home circle. The first few months are times of hazing,—happily now almost extinct,—of the making of new acquaintances, and of introduction to new pleasures. Two or three hours a day must necessarily be given to recitations, but the rest of the time belongs to each student to use as he pleases for study or pleasure. Even the most exacting of parents would confess that some of this time should be given to relaxation.

Such a number of young bloods huddled together within a small area and full of animal spirits are apt to set each other on to actions that at another time would never enter one of their precious heads. It is all quite harmless and natural, and may never amount to anything more. Most of it has no unfortunate results in after life; some of it, indeed, is far better than mere acres of books that have no life or stimulus in them. But occasionally it hits some hopeful heir very hard, and it is such as he who give the university its bad name, if it has one.

The call for members and candidates for a foot-ball team, or for a dozen foot-ball teams, for a crew or a nine, is a very opportune thing at such a time, and the first-named sport issues its summons on registration day. It is difficult to realize, perhaps, how much wholesome restraint such an athletic sport exerts over new men at college, coming at the time when they are at their weakest; to realize how much influence the system of training the members of the team has over others who merely stand by and watch. Each one who offers himself must be on the field at a certain time every day, must stop smoking,—perhaps he only began yesterday,—must stop drinking, and, in fact, put an end to all those villanies that have not yet been born, but for whose arrival preparations are being made by their mother, the devil.

Order and regularity is the first principle of the team. The trainer insists upon this, and the candidate does not object, because it is a point of honor with him to do his best in the defence of the larger honor of his col-

lege. He can do his studying, if he wishes, at any time during the day, except for the pair of hours in the afternoon. He may be put off the team at an early date, but he has the opportunity of joining others, and in any case he has had a little suggestion of something respected by his mates much more than the perpetration of some outlandish prank. The two are not very different from one another, except that one is permitted by the community and the other may be—and probably is—contrary to civil and moral law. They serve, however, precisely the same purpose as far as the perpetrator is concerned. They are both the overflow of this new sense of freedom, of naturally buoyant spirits that can be turned into athletic sports as easily as into cards or something worse.

Much of the danger at a university can be traced to its source in the need of wholesome recreation and exercise. It is not the exercise that detracts from study, but the inaction which detracts from both. College morality in a large sense is a thing maligned. The few who do not see fit to put themselves under its protection furnish the material for gossip and journalism which both of these estimable mediums for spreading news credit to the entire university. The morality there is not a perfect thing, but, without detracting from the respect that is justly given our honored parents, it is infinitely better than it was thirty years ago, and "progress is better than perfection."

Close upon the restraint enforced by the training comes that which is the first essential of education, and which has justly been said to be next to godliness. After two hours of strong, vigorous exercise come a hot and cold bath, a "rub-down" with all sorts of healthy liniments, and a phenomenal dinner of soup, roast beef, potatoes, and custard pudding: what could be a better preparation for morality and health and success? It may be too much for a year, too strong exercise for the heat of spring and summer, but three months of it can easily add twenty pounds to a young man's weight and 10 percent. to his examination marks, and finally—let us be conservative—at least 50 percent. to his manly self-respect and his ability to reason with clear common-sense on whatever comes before him. One needs but to step into the dining-room of the team or into the huge shower-baths of the gymnasium to see that human manners and human morals are being straightened day by day as well as human bodies. Those whose allowance from the parental exchequer is large must forego fancy dinners and indigestible concoctions, liquid or otherwise; those who know of no parental exchequer are under a like necessity of eating a stunning meal three times a day. Far be it from me to taboo a mellow pipe after dinner or a glass of mellow Burgundy. Many a hard-worked brain playing at foot-ball with the world finds infinite solace in these relaxations. They have their admirable uses; but where they serve no other purpose than that of firebrand to start the flame, it is fortunate that in some cases they can be withheld for a time.

Then, too, the game, in conjunction with others, has a small education in it that would, if they were compared, equal several much more dignified occupations and revered studies. It is a peculiar game, familiar no doubt, or should be, to all; for though at every instant during the hour and a half required to play it out there is the same repetition of a scrimmage, yet the instant the ball is again in motion, and the twenty-two men are started after it, the field is in a situation it has never been in before. Signals there are, schemes piled upon schemes, tricks, feints, and rules that are with difficulty followed or totally disregarded; but the history of each play is unique; it

has never been known before. Active thinking, self-reliance, power to carry out what is attempted, and ability to decide at once and in the right way—these are not qualities to be disregarded, nor is any training that tends to perfect them.

All this causes a smile on the part of the reader as giving a little too much importance to a small thing. But though studies and their accessory employments constitute the bulk of college work, they often fail to educate certain necessary qualities and habits of mind that less important matters force into a student's character—qualities that do not come from much reading of books. It eventually appears, therefore, that the smile is one of ignorance, or of knowledge based on newspapers for text-books. Anything that gives men training in good directions is not a proper subject for ridicule. The mere fact that athletics are now a part of the college work, that faculties appoint committees to guide and properly restrain them, is evidence of a recognized importance.

The great trouble, however, at home and abroad, with the game of foot-ball is in its *brutality* (the word has been so abused that it deserves to be put in italics). Here is another point on which journalism has called up all that could be found in the dictionary and elsewhere to help it condemn and at the same time highly color the sport. The newspaper "story" must be a bright, readable account, free from dull detail, and it takes advantage of the extraordinary amount of scratches, which cannot be avoided in a personal contest, to give that spice to its narrative that is demanded by the delicate palate of the American reading public. Yet even this has come to be a story of the past now.

Injuries, however slight, are less frequent than ever, and in the more important games of the last season there is scarcely an instance of rough, brutal, or unfair play. As for accidents, there is an important distinction to be made in estimating them—the distinction between very slight and serious injuries. In an admirable report prepared by a committee appointed for that purpose in 1888 at Harvard University, it appeared from replies sent in by 1,016 students that 912 had received no injuries at all, that 88 had been hurt once, 13 twice, and 3 three times. Of these 104 accidents, 42 resulted from foot-ball, in which 165 students practised regularly every day during two months and about 200 more played games occasionally. Out of the 42 accidents 35 were slight and amounted to nothing. Consequently, seven men supplied the material which filled the newspapers with the brutal details of injuries for nearly two months; nothing being said of the injuries received in other sports.

That is, the accidents in foot-ball are almost entirely such as result from any sport where human beings come in contact with each other, and the serious injuries there are not more common than in daily life. Nor are those that do occur more lasting than or so much to be regretted as some of the moral and mental injuries that the game helps to prevent. On the other hand, the moral brutality supposed to be called up by this contest is still more of a myth.

Men do lose their tempers,—not so much as they did, however,—but such carelessness is in direct violation of rule and is disobedience, and it is punished with discharge. There can be no better school for the cultivation of self-control than one in which the test is so severe as it is here. Fifteen years ago, before systematic training was introduced, foot-ball, like other sports, consisted largely in personal strength and the ability of one man to

knock down half a dozen others. There were then numerous instances of fighting on the field, and these created the material for criticism which has done much to injure the sport and is only now beginning to disappear. At present the increasing skill in playing the game makes it necessary that each of the eleven men work with his comrades to accomplish a single move, and the day of the individual player has gone by. The game, doubtless, is still rough; the players are handled without delicacy; but if a boy cannot learn to control himself here and stand up for his own, it will go hard with him when he tries to stand up against the world outside. He has his friends about him here and knows he is sure of support. In the other fight he may be sadly in want of them.

Friends are, indeed, valuable property, and perhaps the chief benefit a young freshman, new to his college and to his fellow collegians, finds in his first year at college is in the friends he chooses. The sports bring him before his fellows, and thus widen the circle of his acquaintances and his opportunity for choosing valuable friends. Some of our fathers, themselves of the great universities, send their hopeful heirs to small colleges because of their fear of these acquaintances, because of their fear of many things they saw in their own day, and finally because of athletics. Small colleges do their good work; but they are like small cities—they do not give you all that is to be had. They turn out great men, but it is not they who make them great. A larger university is only a smaller world; it has all the good and most of the bad qualities of its greater model, and is a good school for that reason alone. It is not the fault of the college that the boy goes wrong, and its size has but little influence one way or the other. How many sins are shifted to the shoulders of some of our great-hearted alma maters!

The boy learns strange things there, as he will elsewhere, but the somewhat stern training that comes to him only through athletics, the systematic life for a few months in the year, the honest friendships made by standing shoulder to shoulder against a common rival, all give him a habit of picking well from his newly-acquired knowledge and of relying on himself; and we can only regret that the training is not more moderate and of longer duration.

It is not a perfect school—far from it; but it puts a little chivalry into a man and gives him an inkling of systematic habits. Let him go his own way, then; play foot-ball hard if he can—it is better than hard dissipation or anything else of the sort; give him the maternal benediction that has no equal, the assurance that woman is holy always, that every man has his good side, that a reasonable amount of modesty is commendable, and that—well, that there are other good points as well, too numerous to mention.

JOSEPH HAMBLÉN SEARS.

DO AMERICANS LOVE MONEY?

A FIXED idea in the European mind is that Americans are incurably enamored of money; that they pass their lives in pursuit of it, and that they care for very little else. When this idea has reached the populace, it is perverted into the belief that every American is rich, and that riches may be had here almost for the asking. The perversion is not much further from the truth than the original idea; but it is easy for us to see how both the one and the other may be credited abroad.

All things are relative. There is so much more money in the new world;